

ISLAM

Prayer prepares for a modest life

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Prayer is worship of God. It is obligatory for the believer to pray five times a day. These prayers are performed either individually at home or in mosques in congregation. But prior to the performance of prayer comes *wudu*, or ablution. In ablution the hands, face, and feet are washed with water. This washing in order to cleanse awakens the feeling in man that he should always lead a life of purity. Then by uttering the words "God is Great" he enters into the act of *salat*. This is to acknowledge that all greatness belongs to God.

Thus, the proper attitude for man is to lead a life of modesty and humility. By reciting some parts from the Quran in prayer, the devotee refreshes his memory about God's commandments regarding himself. Then he kneels and prostrates himself before God, in physical expression of the idea that the only course that befits him is to lead his life as a submissive servant of God. The prayer is concluded by turning the face first to the right side, then to the left, and uttering the words "*Assalamu-alaykum*" (Peace and blessings of God be upon you!). This is a demonstration of the fact that, spiritually conditioned by prayer, the devotees are now entering into the world with no other thoughts and feelings in their minds but those of mercy towards others, and peace for all mankind. Prayer turns their resolve to remain peaceful members of society, and to harbour no ill feelings towards anyone. Prayer in one respect is to surrender before God, attributing all kinds of greatness to Him alone. In yet another respect, prayer prepares the individual to lead a worthy life among people, adopting an attitude of modesty, sympathy and good-will in all his dealings. In short, prayer perfects man's relation with God as well as with other human beings.